

Safety Matters

Provided by: Robertson Ryan & Associates

Maintain Your Distance— Don't Tailgate

Picture this: You are driving to an important appointment and get stuck behind a driver going a few miles per hour under the speed limit. What do you do?

Many drivers, some who are feeling impatient and others who do not realize they are doing it, follow the vehicle in front of them too closely. While this situation may be commonplace, it puts both you and the drivers in front of you in danger.

Understanding the Danger

Tailgating is an extremely dangerous practice. If there is a collision ahead, if the road is slick, or if traffic becomes heavy, everyone on the road should be prepared to stop. However, if you do not leave sufficient space, even if you are paying close attention, you will not have enough room to.

Two-Second Rule

Almost 10% of all accidents are caused by tailgating. To avoid joining those ranks, always follow the two-second rule.

If you are driving on a normal road in good weather conditions, there should be at least a two-second buffer between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Here is how to calculate your distance: Pay attention to the vehicle in front of you as the driver passes a fixed point such as a mile marker or a sign post. Once the vehicle passes that point, count until you pass that same point ("one thousand and one, one thousand and two..."). Should you reach that

point before counting to two seconds, then you know you are following too closely. Slow down and try the test again with a new fixed point.

Inclement Weather

If road conditions are not good or if you are driving in bad weather, you should increase your distance even further. Conditions like rain, ice and snow not only make roads slippery, they also greatly reduce visibility, so you may not see a hazard farther in front of you to react in time.

Gas Mileage

A common misconception is that tailgating can increase the gas mileage of a vehicle, similar to when racecars "draft"; however, this is not the case. Racecars drive at speeds of 200 mph and must use a lot of energy to cut through the air. When racers ride close to the vehicle in front of them, they use less energy due to their speed. However, driving at speeds of 60 mph does not require nearly the energy to maintain the speed, and therefore, tailgating is not beneficial.

Speak Up

If you have any doubts about safety on the road or any other safety issue, contact your supervisor. At , your safety is our first priority.

